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Rewald Says He Got CIA Secret Japan Train Plans

By Charles Memminger
Star-Bulletin Writer

In a recent British television report, Ronald Rewald talks about obtaining for the CIA secret plans of a Japanese high-speed train still being developed.

But an official at Japan Air Lines, the company that is developing the High Speed Surface Train (HSST) said he can "guarantee" that no such plans ever were taken from JAL.

The reason Takao Matsusue, JAL regional manager in Hawaii, doubts Rewald's claim is that the HSST project engineers welcomed inquiries about the magnetic-levitation train and actually were aggressive in seeking attention.

The HSST is Japan's version of a train that speeds along a track while hovering only millimeters off a rail through magnetic levitation. Several countries, including West Germany, France, Japan and the United States, are testing various designs of the train that can travel more than 100 miles per hour. The object is to provide rapid mass transportation between destinations not served by airplanes.

The British Broadcasting Corp. recently aired an investigative report on Rewald, in which it claimed Rewald's company — Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong — was a CIA front.

IT LISTED a number of things Rewald allegedly did for the CIA, including stealing the plans for the HSST, supplying military arms to Taiwan and spying on Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos.

While officials involved in the investigation of Rewald and his company acknowledge that there was some CIA involvement, they still do not know the entire scope of the involvement. Federal Judge Martin Pence has said that Rewald has tried to exploit minor ties to the CIA.

The BBC obtained a tape-recording of a conversation be-

tween Rewald and his attorney while Rewald was in prison in which he discusses the HSST plans.

On the tape, Rewald says: "I'm a little concerned about your use of me obtaining the blueprints for the HSST project in Japan in that I don't want to end up in bigger trouble than I am. Obviously, I did acquire this for the agency. It wasn't for personal gain or anything else. It was for the agency. I don't want to go to jail for stealing secret plans."

ROBERT SMITH, Rewald's attorney, acknowledges that it is Rewald speaking on the tape, but said he does not know how the BBC obtained the recording. He will not talk about the HSST, saying he is barred from discussing it by a federal court order limiting discussion on CIA matters. Rewald also will not discuss the HSST because of the court order.

JAL officials here, however, do not see any reason to be secretive about the HSST. In fact, they said engineers were eager to show off the prototype of the HSST even back in 1979 when Rewald was in contact with JAL.

"Many people were invited to the test plant," said John Hayasaka, assistant JAL regional manager who has taken rides on the test train. Hayasaka said HSST documents found in Bishop, Baldwin files after Rewald's company collapsed "were absolutely nothing that anybody couldn't get."

Regional Manager Matsusue said JAL knows of no secrets about the HSST that ever were lost to either government or industrial spies. Hayasaka said any parts of the HSST that were "innovative" were protected by international patents.

HAYASAKA ALSO said that although Japan and the United States are highly competitive in developing computers, there is no similar competition in the development of high-speed trains.

Costakis Papacostas, a transportation engineer at the University of Hawaii, said while parts of the HSST project might have contained innovative features, "it was no secret that (JAL) was working on (the HSST)."

"A couple of years ago, people here were invited to Japan to inspect the system," Papacostas said.

Rewald's files, now in the hands of the bankruptcy trustee, contain letters between Rewald and Akira Hayashi, developer of the HSST. One letter from Rewald is written on CMI Investment Corp. stationery.

(CMI, which Rewald formed in Wisconsin before he moved to Hawaii, was the predecessor to Bishop, Baldwin.)

Bankruptcy officials have determined that the CIA apparently did use CMI as a maildrop and a front from some CIA activities.

IT WAS IN RESPONSE to the CMI letter that Hayashi sent Rewald a packet of detailed information about the HSST. But it was information JAL officials say would be sent to anyone requesting it.

At about the same time Rewald allegedly received secret information about the HSST, there were plans to display the Japanese train project at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, at the Paris Air Show and a transportation exposition in West Germany, according to a HSST brochure.